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Stabenow, Levin Announce \$100,000 for Drug-Free Communities Support Program in Detroit

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin (D-MI) announced today that the Empowerment Zone Coalition, Inc. (EZC) will receive \$100,000 from the U.S. Department of Justice as part of a Drug-Free Communities Support Program. The grant will support the Coalition's work to create a community-based substance abuse prevention program.

"A good, solid anti-drug strategy starts with prevention," said Levin. "The Empowerment Zone Coalition has worked year after year to heighten community awareness regarding substance abuse problems in Detroit and has worked with the community to encourage youth to remain drug-free."

"This is an investment in a healthy future here in Detroit and across America," Stabenow said. "We know that if we can keep our kids away from drugs, alcohol and tobacco before they turn 21, the odds are they will grow up to be healthy adults who will never risk their health through substance abuse. And that will have big payoffs in both reduced healthcare costs and less lost time at work."

EZC works to empower youth, their peers, parents, and other sectors of the community to take an active role in the prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse by providing technical assistance and resources to churches, law enforcement agencies, community-based organizations, neighborhood groups, parent groups, and others. The program's three-year goals are:

- to maintain and strengthen collaborations that will support substance abuse prevention and reduction efforts among youth;
- to change community norms, attitudes, and policies to promote community health, safety, and substance abuse prevention;
- to raise community awareness of the nature and extent of substance abuse among youth;
- to develop alternative youth prevention programs and activities; and
- to conduct a thorough evaluation of coalition operations and develop effective monitoring and assessment tools to increase the efficiency of coalition efforts.

EZC is an active member of the Partnership for a Drug-Free Detroit and the Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America. The coalition is a diverse collaboration of community groups, schools, churches, local businesses, and law enforcement agencies united in substance abuse prevention.